(iv) The officers of the State Governments' and the Ministry pay surprise checks of the FPSs, to over see the quality of foodgrains being distributed through TPDS.

(v) The officers of the Department designated as 'Area Officers' for monitoring the TPDS work in the respective States also undertake visits to the storage depots and the FPSs, during their visit to the States to check the quality of foodgrains being issued.

Amendment to Consumer Protection Act

1233. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to amend the Consumer Protection Act during the current Session of Parliament;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the highlights of the amendments comtemplated; and

(d) whether the major consumer groups operating in the country including Consumer Coordination Council have been consulted with regard to the proposed amendments and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) to (b) The Consumer Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2001 to amend the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 26th April, 2001. The proposed amendments are mainly aimed at facilitating quicker disposal of consumer complaints, streamlining the procedures and widening the scope of the Act, strengthening the powers of the redressal agencies etc.

(c) Some of the important amendments contained in the Bill are as follows:

(i) Creation of benches of the National Commission and State Commissions and holding of circuit benches;

(ii) Prescribing time-frame for admission of complaint, issue of notices and disposal of complaint;

(iii) Exclusion of services availed for commercial purposes;

(iv) Recovery of compensation amount ordered by the redressal agency through certificate case as arrears of land revenue;

(v) Provision for issue of interim orders by the redressal agencies;

(vi) Establishment of consumer protection council at district level.

(d) Yes, Sir.

Rice Scam in FCI godowns

1234. SHRI KHAGEN DAS:
SHRI SOLIPETA RAMACHANDRA REDDY:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Rs. 2 crore rice scam has been unearthed by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) in its godowns in Punjab;

(b) whether the local FCI officials had allowed sub-standard quality of rice to be transported for distribution under the PDS to New Cooch Behar in West Bengal;

(c) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(d) what steps have been taken to apprehend the culprits

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the investigation of a complaint, it was detected that 2395 MTs of rice common (Boiled) loaded in the special Ex-Beas (out of Dhilwan stocks) on 26.1.2001, in fact, was loaded directly by two millers. Initially the consignee staff/officers at Cooch Behar in West Bengal Region, in connivance with the millers, and the FCI staff of Dhilwan, acknowledged the receipt of the said stocks and intimated receipt of